



Our Home, our Country, and our Brother Man.

BREEDS AND RACES.

AYRSHIRE CATTLE. The leading breeds of cattle, at the present day, are the Durham, Herefords, Ayrshires, Devonshires, Jerseys and Galloways. Of these cattle we consider the three first named as breeds, by which we mean that they have been manufactured by the skill of man by breeding for a series of years from various kinds of cattle, until certain points and characteristics have become established in them, and are with care kept up with comparative ease. The three last, Devons, Jerseys and Galloways, we consider races made, not by man, but established by nature. We are aware that there may be exceptions taken to this position, but we think we are right. The three first named breeds, if not bred with care and skill, will degenerate fast. They are constantly tending back to their original state, "varying back," as the breeders say, while the three last, if not bred with care and skill, will nevertheless retain their peculiar characteristics. They may vary in some points and become diminished in size through neglect, but they will still keep up their foreign blood with them; they will continue to be what they were in the start—Devons will be Devons, Jerseys continue Jerseys, and Galloways Galloways. We are aware that some writers say that the Galloways, seventy years ago, had horns. We doubt it, but, if they had, it would not materially change the result. The main features of Galloways do not depend upon the having or not having horns, but upon their peculiar shape, general form, and the stamina of the animal, which adapt it to peculiar localities and habits of life.

We present this week, a very fine one of an Ayrshire cow, representing one of the herd purchased last summer, in Ayrshire (Scotland), by Sanford Howard, Esq., for Dr. Geo. B. Loring, of Salem, Mass.

The Ayrshire breed of cattle are found in the county of Ayrshire, in Scotland, and have been produced by breeders in that country, by crosses with different varieties of cattle, with a view of obtaining a hardy cow of medium size, that should possess great milking properties.

Without going into details, in regard to their origin, we would say, that, as milkers, giving a large flow of milk, of rather rich quality, they undoubtedly exceed many others. Flint in his recent work on milk cows, makes the following remarks in regard to them:—

"Youatt estimates the daily yield of an Ayrshire cow for the first two or three months after calving, at five gallons a day, on an average; for the next three months, at three gallons; and for the next four months, at one gallon and a half. This would be 850 gallons as the annual average of a cow; but, allowing for some unproductive cows, he estimates the average of a dairy at 600 gallons per annum for each cow. Three gallons and a half of the Ayrshire cow's milk will yield one and a half pounds of butter. He therefore reckons 257 pounds of butter, or 514 pounds of cheese, at the rate of 24 pounds of cheese, as the yield of every cow, at a fair and perhaps rather low estimate, in an Ayrshire dairy, during the year. Aiton says the yield much higher, saying that 'thousands of the best Ayrshire dairy-cows, when in prime condition and well fed, produce 1000 gallons of milk per annum; that in general three and three-quarters to four gallons of their milk will yield a pound and a half of butter; and that 274 gallons of their milk will make 21 pounds of full-milk cheese.' Mr. Rankin puts it lower—at about 650 to 700 gallons to each cow; on his own farm of inferior soil, his dairy produced an average of 550 gallons only.

"One of the four cows originally imported into this country by John P. Cushing, Esq., of Massachusetts, gave in one year 3864 quarts, bore measure, or about 464 gallons, at ten pounds to the gallon, being an average of over ten and a half bushels a day for the whole year. It is asserted, on good authority, that the first Ayrshire cow imported by the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, in 1837, yielded sixteen pounds of butter a week, for several weeks in succession, on grass feed only. These yields are not so large as those stated by Aiton; but it should, perhaps, be recollected that our climate is less favorable to the production of milk than that of England and Scotland, and that no cow imported after arriving at maturity could be expected to yield as much, under the same circumstances, as one bred on the spot where the trial is made, and perfectly acclimated."

He also says:—"According to Mr. Hartley, the most approved shape and marks of a good dairy cow are as follows: Head small, long, and narrow towards the muzzle; horns small, clear, bent, and placed at considerable distance from each other; eyes not large, but brisk and lively; neck slender and long, tapering towards the head, with a little loose skin below; shoulders and forequarters light and thin; hind quarters large and broad; back straight, and joints slack and open; carcass deep in the ribs; tail small and long, reaching to the heels; legs small and short, with firm joints; udder square, but a little oblong, stretching forward, thin-skinned and capacious, but not too large; teats or paps small, pointing outwards, and at a considerable distance from each other; milk-veins capacious and prominent; skin loose, thin, and soft like a glove; hair short, soft and woolly; general figure, when in flesh, handsome and well proportioned.

"If this description of the Ayrshire cow be correct, it will be seen that her head and neck are remarkably clean and fine, the latter swelling towards the shoulders, both parts being unincumbered with superfluous flesh. The same general form extends backwards, the forequarters being light, the shoulders thin, and the carcass swelling out towards the hind quarters, so that stand-

ing in front of her it has the form of a blunt wedge. Such a structure indicates very fully developed digestive organs, which exert a powerful influence on the exercise of all the functions of the body, and especially on the secretion of the milky glands, accompanied with milk-veins and udder partaking of the same character as the stomach and viscera, being large and capacious, while the internal skin and interior walls of the milk-glands are thin and elastic, and all parts arranged in a manner especially calculated for the production of milk.

"A cow with these marks will generally be of a quiet and docile temper, which greatly enhances her value. A cow that is of a quiet and contented disposition feeds at ease, is milked with ease, and yields more than one of an opposite temperament; while after she is past her usefulness as a milker she will easily take on fat, and make fine beef and a good quantity of tallow, because she feeds freely, and when dry the food which went to make milk is converted into fat and flesh. But there is no breed of cows with which gentleness of treatment is so indispensable as with the Ayrshire, on account of her naturally nervous temperament. If she receives other than kind and gentle treatment, she will often resent it with angry looks and gestures, and withhold her milk; and if such treatment is long continued, will dry up; but she willingly and easily yields it to the hand that fondles her, and all her looks and movements towards her friends are quiet and mild."

Grade Ayrshires have been introduced among us, and found to be profitable, thrifty cattle. But very few full bloods have yet been introduced. J. D. Lang, of Vassalboro', has a fine full blood bull and a cow. S. L. Goodale, of Saco, has a full blood cow, from the Gray's herd in Fredrickton, N. B. Arrangements have been made, we understand, by certain other individuals in this state, to bring some more in, during the coming spring. We look upon them as a valuable acquisition to our dairy stock, and hope the day is not far distant, when we shall have large herds of them. The attentions of the great bulk of our stock breeders have been turned too exclusively to beef and oxen, while good milkers have become too scarce. A good grazing state like Maine, ought to be ashamed to import butter and cheese.

HUNGARIAN GRASS.

Week before last we made some remarks on the culture of this grass, which has recently been christened "Honey Blade," and cracked up as something new. We also gave you some remarks made by western men for and against it. We now copy the following from the American Agriculturist, which comes out strong against this new movement. We hope those farmers in Maine who wish, will try its culture, but not expect too much from it. The Agriculturist says:—

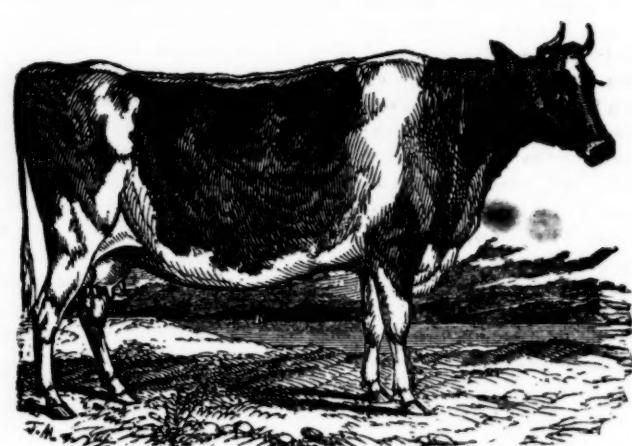
"We have already advised our own readers to be careful about purchasing any professedly new plant or seed, for which extraordinary claims are put forth, until they see it noticed or at least advertised in these columns. We can but hope they have so far heeded this advice that none of them have been 'taken in and done for' by the specious humbug now abroad in the land. We refer to selling Hungarian Grass seed at exorbitant prices under the assumed name of 'Honey Blade Grass.' We regret to find that any of our respectable contemporaries have given it so much countenance, as to admit this deception into their advertising columns. It must certainly have been done unwittingly, for we can but believe that no respectable publisher would knowingly allow his readers, in whom he should have a personal interest, to be cheated out of their hard earned dollars, for the sake of the paltry few cents he may get for an advertisement.

With regard to this 'Honey Blade Grass,' we will make a statement or two, and hereafter, if it is necessary, show up the parties who are engaged in it, particularly the prime movers in St. Louis, and this city. It amounts to simply this: A species of Millet, said to have originally come over from Hungary in the pocket of an 'exile,' has been propagated at the west for several years under the name of 'Hungarian Grass.' This last name has become so common that we have used it in designating the article.

It is grown like the old millet from which it does not materially differ, and like the old kinds may be cultivated for the ripened seed, or cut up green and cured as hay or straw for feeding. If ripened for seed, the straw is probably about as good for feeding as well cured oat straw—perhaps a trifle better. We have for many years advised farmers to grow the ordinary millet for seed, and especially as a soiling crop—that is, to be cut green and fed either green or in a dried state.

The 'Hungarian Grass' has become so widely disseminated, that the seed is now abundant and could recently be obtained as low as \$1 a bushel. Wishing some to distribute to such of our distant subscribers as might desire to try a little of it, we engaged a dealer in this city to procure a lot of as pure and good quality as he could get in the country. After paying him for his trouble in addition to a profit, it costs only \$2 a bushel (of 51 lbs.) delivered at our office.

Scarcely had our last number gone to press before a host of letters came in from subscribers and others making inquiries as to a wonderful new seed offered as 'Honey Blade Grass.' We immediately investigated the matter. Our first movement was to send two outside parties, who would not be suspected, to the head quarters or 'agency' in this city. The seed obtained (which we have now in possession) proved to be precisely like the Hungarian grass we had previously obtained at the west. Further investigation has shown that one or more parties, having St. Louis as headquarters, have secured a large supply of the Hungarian Grass or Millet, dubbed it 'Honey Blade Grass,' issued some hundreds of thousands of pamphlets to farmers, setting forth extravagant properties and merits, and are patronizingly offering it in \$3 bags (no less quantity.) We have one of these bags now in our office procured directly from the 'agency' in this city. It weighed just 51 lbs., including bag, and measured 94 qts. This we purposely purchased for examination, and paid the regular price of \$3 per bag. This is at the rate of over \$10 per bu. (It was brought for us by one of our associates who chanced to be unknown at the 'agency.')



Ayrshire Heifer.

Any one can call and compare this with the Hungarian Grass. The 'agent' was recently shown a sample of each laid upon two similar pieces of paper, and could not pick out his own 'Honey Blade.' We remonstrated with him for attempting to gull the community by the assumed name and extravagant claims. He unwittingly confessed that the name Honey Blade Grass, was merely a 'trade mark,' and attempted to justify his course, by this and other subterfuges.

But enough on this subject now. If what we have stated be not enough to utterly condemn this attempt to get \$10 per bushel for a common article, of which the market price is \$2.00 and downward, we will give it another 'lift,' and not spare the offenders either."

A subsequent close examination reveals sundry 'fool seeds' in this pure 'Honey Blade seed' which the pamphlet so urgently advises farmers to purchase instead of the common Hungarian Grass, which it says is an entirely different article. It is indeed, different, if our bag from the 'N. Y. Agency' is a fair sample.

POTATOES VS. CORN.

At a recent meeting of the Waterville Farmers' Club, the subject for discussion was 'Hood Crops.' Some valuable facts were elicited. The question being which is the more profitable, corn or potatoes, it was decided that potatoes yielded the most profit. This decision may not even a fair one to many, but in its decision, the Club were governed by figures and facts which were incontrovertible. The Mail gives us the following as the summing up of the matter:—

"Col. Marston, as usual, was ready with facts and figures, which were victorious, as they ought ever to be, over mere 'guess work.' In the opinion of those present, 30 loads of manure, valued at \$1.00 a load, are applied to corn as often as 10 are to potatoes. One-third of this extra manure (20 divided by 3=6 2/3)—six and two-thirds loads—was supposed to be absorbed by the corn crop, the value of which was estimated at \$6.67. To this it was thought should be added, for hauling and spreading the extra manure thus absorbed, \$1.33; with three dollars for applying 10 loads in the hill instead of broadcast; and two dollars for extra labor of hoeing the corn—making in all a charge against the corn crop of thirteen dollars. The harvesting and husking of the corn was set against the digging of the potatoes; and the fodder was estimated at ten dollars.

"Now, for the last ten years, the average yield of corn, with the Colonel, had been 37 bushels per acre, and the average price 95 cents—making the average receipts thirty-five dollars and fifty-two cents: while the average yield of potatoes, in the same time, had been 82 bushels; the average price 50 cents; and the average receipts forty-one dollars fifty-two cents—reckoning nothing for the small ones and those partially decayed, that were fed to stock.

"Here was a difference in receipts, as will be readily seen, of \$5.48 in favor of potatoes; which added to the extra manure and cost of cultivation, minus the value of the fodder (13—10=3) makes \$8.48. Now deducting \$1.48 from this, the difference in cost of seed, and the result is in favor of the potatoes, to the amount of \$7.00 per acre."

Discussions like the above will be found very profitable to our Farmers' Clubs. There are many crops whose comparative profits it would trouble many even of our best farmers to determine. The only way is by hearing and comparing the evidence for and against, and showing the figures to back up the statements made. There is nothing so convincing as the footings of the debt and credit accounts, and a balance on the wrong side will do more to settle the question under debate than hours of talking and acres of guesswork.

VALUE OF CORN FODDER.

I have been a farmer for a number of years, but never knew the value of corn fodder until the present season. On the fodder of a little less than one-half acre of corn, I kept a horse and a cow from the 15th of 10th mo., 1858, to the 15th of 1st mo., 1859, (3 months.) My horse had no more grain than I have usually given him when feeding on good hay, viz:—one peck of oats per day. He worked every day, or nearly so, hauling sand upon a cranberry bog. I chopped the fodder in a common hay cutter, and the cow always eat up what the horse left. Aside from the chopped corn fodder, the cow had but an occasional 'mess' of roots. Since the 15th of last month, I have chopped some oat straw and mixed it with the corn fodder in equal quantities, of which mixture I have enough to last this month out. I have not fed 50 lbs. of hay this winter. I hauled from the same ground about 100 bushels of ears of corn, besides considerable that was too green to save. I also sold 4 tons of pumpkins, at \$2.00 per ton, retaining several loads for my own use. I cut up my corn before the frost, bound it in bundles and carefully stacked it in the field. After husking, I took care to have the stacks set erect upon loose floors, to prevent them from moulding.

I think farmers generally would do well to take more pains in saving their corn fodder, especially in seasons where hay is short. I think, too, that there is more advantage in cutting it, than in cutting any other fodder, as cattle and horses will not avoid the large stalks, if uncut, which will pass into the manure heap, where they are found far more troublesome than useful.

Geo. Richardson.
Kendall's Mills, 2d mo. 7th, 1859.

TANNING WITH SWEET PERN.

Messrs. Editor:—Spending a few days at So. China, and having heard of the new mode of tanning recently introduced by Messrs. Russell & Harrington, we concluded to make a little investigation in relation to the matter; and so visited some shops where it was being made up, saw some of the leather that had been worn for some time, and learned the following facts:

First, that the process of tanning is much cheaper, and requires only about half of the usual time. One ton of sweet fern is equal to about four cords of hemlock bark, and costs only about ten dollars per ton, while the average cost of bark in the State is about five dollars per cord, thereby saving half of the expense in that article so largely used in tanning. Bark in the Middle States will average eight or ten dollars per cord. There will also be a saving of the cost of grinding, which amounts to about one dollar per cord.

Again, the leather tanned by fern is believed, by those who have made it up, and those who have worn it, to be far superior to that tanned in the usual way, so much so that the demand for it, where it has been introduced, cannot be met. It exceeds in these particulars—the leather is much tougher, hence less liable to tear; while the old process seems to weaken its fibrous texture, this process leaves the leather with its original strength, and as a natural consequence it will wear longer. It also has another very desirable quality, that of being impervious to water: when worn in the water, none is able to enter, and you may see this in the texture of the leather, it being closer than that tanned in the usual way. This single quality, of itself, is of great value, and ought at once to commend it to the notice of all engaged in the leather business.

We learn, also, that the fern tanned leather will sell in the market, where it has been introduced, at an advance of twenty-five per cent. on all other leather. It is believed that nearly one-half of the capital now invested in tanning may be dispensed with under the new mode, and one-half of the labor, in that department of tanning, is saved, it requiring only half the time to tan it,—hence, double the amount of leather can be tanned in the same number of vats.

Sweet fern, which has heretofore been considered useless, now bids fair to be of great value in mechanical arts; and such is its abundance all along our coast, and especially in the western part of this State, also in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and, in fact, in all the New England States, New Jersey, New York, and even in the West, that no fears need be entertained in regard to the needed supply.

Hon. H. Greeley, we believe, has given his opinion that the article will never need to be cultivated for tanning purposes, as there is already a great abundance growing in the United States for all tanning purposes.

We are certainly very favorably impressed with this new discovery of the properties and application of the fern, and can see no good reason why it should not come into general use throughout our country. A tannery, under this mode of tanning, may be erected at almost any place, as fern can be pressed like hay, and then transported very cheaply, especially along the sea coast. And old tanneries that have run down by reason of the scarcity of bark, may now be revived and do a thriving business.

We presume that any further information can be obtained by addressing the inventors at South China, Me.

W. Waterville, Jan., 1859.

BAD LUCK WITH AN ORCHARD.

FRIEND HOLMES:—I wish to make a few inquiries in regard to the treatment and management of a young orchard. I have been at considerable trouble and expense to get an orchard, and it has amounted to almost a failure. I began with trees imported from Rochester, N. Y., which did well the first season, grew remarkably and made a fine appearance, so much so that I would not have taken a dollar a piece for them, in the fall, after setting in the spring. Two-thirds of them died the first winter, two-thirds of the remainder the next, and the third winter destroyed the whole. So much for foreign trees. Two years ago last spring, I set fifty, grown in my own neighborhood. They all lived and did finely the first summer, but during the winter something like half of them died. One year ago last spring, I set fifty more, which did as well as the former, through the summer, but died in winter, as did the others; so that, last season, I had about forty trees out of one hundred and sixty that showed foliage upon the tree. When a boy, living with my father, I set out his orchard, and there was not one in ten of the trees that did not come to maturity, and they are still doing well and in a good bearing condition.

Now, will you or some of your correspondents tell me the reason of my failure. The soil that I have enclosed for an orchard is in part light and loamy, other parts are moist, and a small part of it is quite wet, and with the exception of one corner, it is very stony, but the trees do no better in one place than in another. That being the case, I cannot lay it to the soil. I know that two years since there was much complaint about apple trees dying, but I heard little or none, last year. Now, as I contemplate setting in the spring, I wish to ascertain the best method of setting; whether trees will be likely to do well set where one has died; or whether it would be advisable to place a quantity of manure under the tree, and if so, of what kind, &c. By giving me the desired information, you will confer a favor upon one at least of your subscribers.

D. COFFIN.

Thorndike, Jan. 21, 1859.

Note. Will some of our friends, experienced in orcharding, give friend Coffin the benefit of their advice on this subject?

We recommend to him to plant the seeds where he would like to have the tree, and let them grow up. This may seem a slow process, but he would succeed sooner so than by the mode pursued thus far.

Ed.

ANOTHER GOOD CROP. Mr. James Cram, of Bridgewater, raised the past season, 104 bushels of excellent wheat from five bushels of seed. He says if the farmers do not raise good wheat, it is their own fault. [Acrostek Pioneer.]

BLOODY MILK.

FRIEND HOLMES:—I have a valuable cow that has given bloody milk for the last six months, or more, and I have given her saltpetre and garget, but it does no good. What shall I do for her? E. D. ROBINSON.

Farmington, Feb. 15, 1859.

Note. Unload the blood vessel of the udder, and stimulate the udder to a more healthy action. The udder is a large gland, whose office is to secrete milk from the blood conveyed to it by the arteries, and to retain it in the milk cells until milked away. If this becomes deranged in its action, the blood becomes mingled with the milk. Bleeding from what is called the milk vein will unload the vessels for a time. Strong cathartics will do it, though not so rapidly, and cold bathing and frictions of the lag will stimulate to more healthy action.

Ed.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Deferred Reports.

Topic 8. The committee charged to inquire into "What proportion of the funds of Agricultural Societies, if any, should be expended in promoting general or permanent farm improvements?" report: That while the plan now in common use, of awarding premiums on animals, vegetable products, implements and articles, shown at our fairs, has been productive of much good, and ought by no means to be discontinued, yet believe that by this plan only a small portion of the great field of improvement which is open to the farmers of Maine, receives any direct or sufficient encouragement or stimulus. We believe the time has come when our societies should commence a new line of effort, aiming at greater and more important results, although, doubtless, making less display at our annual exhibitions.

It is far easier to bestow careful treatment and liberal feeding or manuring upon an animal or a crop, so as to secure the highest prizes awarded for such, than it is to bring up to a similar standard of excellence all the stock and all the crops of the farm; easier far, than to arrange the whole farm, its buildings, fences, and all else which pertains to it, in the best possible order, and to put the whole in the best condition. And your committee feel confident that the latter should be the aim of every farmer, rather than a single great crop, or a wonderfully fine animal.

Some feeble efforts have been attempted of this sort, by many of our societies, but experience has fully shown that the small premiums offered of \$5, \$10, or \$15, "for the best managed farm," have failed of accomplishing much good.

But where large prospective prizes have been offered for the greatest improvement to be made during a series of years, the happiest results have followed. As an instance in point, we refer to what has recently taken place in Cumberland Co., from the offer two or three years of one prize of \$100, and a second of \$50, for the greatest improvements to be made in two years.

What have been the results? The highly intelligent committee who went, each year, over the whole ground, in their report, speak not only of the earnest, ardent efforts of some fifteen or twenty competitors, for the greatest improvement in their power, but of "the deep interest manifested by those whose farms were not entered, to see, and discuss the economy of the improvements made, and in many instances to commence the work of reform upon their own premises; giving evidence that this class of premiums is about to accomplish an amount of good to the agriculture of the county, not easily to be estimated. It is truly gratifying to observe the spirit of inquiry everywhere manifested, as to the best methods of conducting farm operations. The old rules in which the fathers tamed so sturdily and persistently, are being carefully examined; and, though perhaps they were well adapted to the circumstances of those who marked them out, they are now often found too deep and heavy, too hilly and circuitous for these latter times. Improvement is now the order of the day; improved stock, improved buildings, improved implements, improved orchards, gardens, mowings, pastures, improved everything. Men of intelligence, energy and perseverance, and with abundant capital, are enlisting in it; and, if we mistake not the signs of the times, farming in Cumberland County is soon to assume a rank, as an occupation, second to no other, either in point of the skill with which it is conducted, or the profits with which it will be made to return."

What has come to pass in Cumberland, may be safely calculated upon, wherever a similar movement is started in other counties, and the actual benefit accruing to the agricultural community, will, in the opinion of your committee, be many fold greater and more lasting, than by expending the same sum in prizes upon extra fine productions, brought to the fair; leaving behind upon the farm, possibly, many things which the owner would be less anxious to have properly appreciated by a discriminating committee.

But we are not by the objection that many of our Agricultural Societies are not able to devote the requisite amount for this purpose, without great inconvenience or sacrifice; perhaps, would be obliged to suspend their ordinary operations for a year, in order to do it.

Without expressing an opinion whether this would be advisable or not, we beg to make a suggestion, viz: Let ten, twenty, or thirty per cent. of the required sum (according to circumstances,) be laid aside from the usual expenditure, for this special purpose, and be put at interest; meantime, agitate the subject, awaken an interest in it, and at the proper time announce the prizes and allow not less than three years, perhaps four or five, to accomplish the improvements.

Another objection may be made,—that it will cost something for a committee to visit all the competitors, and examine carefully their operations,—to note down year by year the changes taking place on each farm, and to compare results.

We answer, very true,—but is it not worth something to visit all the go-ahead farmers, and to have the opportunity of examining, and criticizing, and comparing, and profiting by what can be seen and learned in such a trip? Farmers suffer more by isolation, by the lack of opportunity of visiting and examining each other's sphere of operations. They meet at church, and occasion-

ally at market. What they need is to meet in their factories, and beside their machinery while it is running. Now, we say that placing a man on such a committee, is putting him into a better Agricultural School, than can be found elsewhere in all New England, and if he deduct fair tuition fees from the needful expenses, there will not be a frightful sum remaining to be provided for otherwise. Respectfully submitted.

SEWARD DILL, } Com.
S. L. GOODALE, }
Hiram Stevens, }

HOW TO MAKE MAPLE SUGAR.

Last year several essays were received in response to our call for experience on this important topic. We embody here the principal suggestions contained in these letters.

The time for tapping of course varies with the locality and the character of the season. In many places in ordinary seasons a large amount of sugar is made during February. The business should commence as early as the sap will flow.

Where but few trees are attended to, the ordinary utensils and fixtures used for household purposes will be sufficient; but where sugar-making is a part of the business of the farm, the grove or "sap bush," numbering from a hundred to thousands of trees, special, and in some cases, extensive preparations are necessary.

For tapping, a 1 inch bit is generally preferred. The holes should be 1 1/2 to 2 inches deep, entering only the sap wood, and inclining slightly upwards, to prevent the sap remaining and souring in the orifice. "Boxing," or chipping, is condemned as injurious to the tree, and the gash being exposed to the light and air, the wood soon dries, so as to require additional cutting or "freshening."

Wooden tubes, of quill elder, sumach, or pine, as may be most convenient, are preferable to tin or sheet iron. They should be fitted closely into the opening. Pails or tubs of cedar or pine, the inside unpainted, with a board cover to exclude leaves and dust, are the best vessels for receiving the sap from the tree. They may be hooped with wood, and made quite cheaply. It is well to have the top of larger diameter than the bottom, so that ice may be easily removed, in case the sap should freeze in them. An auger hole or notch cut in the edge of the cover, admits the sap into the pail.

When the trees are quite near each other, labor may be saved by using leading troughs, running from tree to tree, and all finally emptying into a receiving tub. Or a line of troughs from near the centre of the bush to the tub, may be made, into which the collecting vessels are emptied. There is more waste in this manner from leaking, spilling, and evaporation, than in the common method of hauling the sap to the boiling place in a capacious covered tub, mounted on a sled.

Sheet iron pans, (Russia iron is best,) five or six inches deep, set in mason work, so that the bottom is exposed to the heat, will evaporate the sap much more rapidly than can be done in the old-fashioned arch kettles.

A brick wall built across the middle of the fire chamber, to within two inches of the bottom of the pan, will throw the heat against the bottom of the pan, and save much fuel.

Some of the most successful sugar makers say, it is of the greatest importance in sugar making, that the sap be reduced to syrup in the shortest possible time after being collected. Although the sap may not sour in several days, its properties are undoubtedly affected by light and air, and the amount of crystallizable matter considerably diminished, so that even if the "run" be light for a few days, it is best to reduce to syrup every 8 or 12 hours. The precaution is even more necessary in the latter part of the season, when the sap crystallizes with more difficulty. By judicious boiling the available run may be prolonged several days.

To "sugar off," the syrup should be strained through a thick woolen cloth into a medium sized kettle, and reduced slowly, carefully guarding against burning, as this would greatly injure the color, and quality of the sugar. It is sufficiently done, when threads of the thick syrup break off short like glass, after cooling quickly in water or on snow. Then remove it from the fire, stir it continually, and when it begins to "grain," immediately turn it into the moulds. Grained sugar is prepared in the same manner, only that the stirring is continued until the mass is dry.

We have said nothing of clarifying, for experience has proved that if proper care be taken to keep every article used in the various processes scrupulously clean, and to prevent leaves, insects, etc., from falling into the sap, no clarifying agents are needed. We have eaten maple sugar of the finest quality both as to flavor and color, made entirely without clarifying.

The best form for the city retail market, is in small cakes, weighing from two to four ounces, as these are more convenient for peddling out.

[Am. Agriculturist.]

THE SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK. According to the annual report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the State of New York, there are 11,327 school districts in the State, exclusive of the cities. The number of school houses is 11,275 in the rural districts and 262 in the cities. Nearly 10,000 of them are frame buildings, less than 1000 brick, about 500 stone, and 300 are built of logs. The number of children entitled to common school instruction (viz: between the ages of four and twenty-one) is 1,238,175, and the number who have attended school is 842,137. There are 26,153 teachers employed, of whom 8295 are men and 17,857 women. The amount of money appropriated for school purposes last year was \$3,792,948, about half of which was raised in the cities, and the rest in the rural districts. The school libraries contain 1,402,253 volumes.

MAINE SHINGLES 82 YEARS OLD. There are now shingles upon the roof of the old Farmington, Connecticut, church which have been there 82 years and are still serviceable. The Hartford Courant says that in 1776 the builders of the church chartered a vessel to go to Maine for shingles, and they brought some home that were 18 inches long, and three-fourths of an inch thick at the butt. Put on with six inch lap, they are not half worn through to day, and are good for many a year longer.

The Muse.

From the Atlantic Monthly.

THE OPENING OF THE PIANO

In the little southern parlor of the house you may have seen

With the gentlest touch, and the gentle looking westward to the green.

At the side toward the sunset, with the window on its right.

Stood the London-made piano in a dream of to-night.

Ah me! how I remember the evening when it came!

What a cry of eager voices, what a group of cheeks in flame.

When the wondrous box was opened that had come from overseas.

With its smell of mastic-varnish and its flash of ivory keys!

Then the children all grew frolic in the restlessness of joy.

For the boy would push his sister, and the sister crowd the boy.

Till the father asked for quiet in his grave paternal way.

But the mother hushed the tumult with the words, "Now, Mary, play."

For the dear soul knew that music was a very sovereign balm.

She had sprinkled it over sorrow and seen its brow grow calm.

In the days of slender harpsichords with tapping tinkling quills.

Or cradling to her spirit with its thin metallic thrills.

So Mary, the household minstrel, who always loved to please.

Sat down to the new "Clementi," and struck the glittering keys.

Hushed were the children's voices, and every eye grew dim.

As, floating from lip and finger, arose the "Vesper Hymn."

—Catharine, child of a neighbor, curly and rosy-red.

(Wedded since, and a widow—something like ten years dead.)

Hearing a gush of music such as none before.

Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the open door.

Just as the "Jubilant" in threaded whisper dies.

"Open it! open it, lady!" the little maiden cries.

(For she thought 'twas a singing creature caged in a box she heard.)

"Open it! open it, lady! and let me see the bird!"

THE OLD FOLKS' ROOM.

The old man sat by the chimney side.

His face was wrinkled and wan.

And he leaned both hands on his stout oak cane.

As if all his work was done.

His coat was of good old fashioned gray.

The pockets were deep and wide.

Where his "spoon" and his steel tobacco box

Lay snugly side by side.

The old man liked to sit the fire.

So near him the logs were kept.

Sometimes he mused as he gazed at the coals.

Sometimes he sat and slept.

What saw he in the embers there?

Ah! pictures of other years.

And now and then they wakened smiles.

But oftener started tears.

His good wife sat on the other side.

In a high-backed, flag-stained chair.

I see 'neath the arch of her emerald cap

The shadow of her silver hair.

There's a happy look on her aged face.

As she busily looks for him.

And Nellie takes up the stilted dropped.

For grandmother's eyes are dim.

Their children come and read the news.

To pass the time each day.

How it tells the blood in an old man's heart.

To read of the world away.

'Tis a home scene, I tell you so.

But pleasant it is to view.

At least I thought it so myself.

And sketched it down for you.

Be kind to the old, my friend.

They're worn with the world's strife.

Though bravely and bravely they fight.

The stern fierce battle of life.

They taught our youthful feet to climb

Upward life's rugged slope.

Then let us lead them gently down

To where the weary step

The Story Teller.

THE

COBBLER'S TEMPTATION.

Jareb Gropp sat in his little shop upon his little

low bench, and he pegged and tapped away

merrily upon his well known knee. He was a

jolly fellow, this Jareb. Poor, 'tis true, but just

poor enough to be free from care. He owned

the roofed box in which he worked, and so he

owned the little thatched out joining it. In the

cot he lived with his wife and seven children.

And in the shop he worked cheerfully all the

day long. He was not afraid of robbers, for he

had nothing worth carrying off; and he feared

no man, for he never did him a wrong.

A merry fellow was Jareb Gropp. He sang as

he pegged, and his jolly notes lacked only

musical sound to make them attractive. He was

built after the same pattern as were his coat and

shiny, good natured face, and with a bald pate,

though he was five and forty years old.

"Troll-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol!" sang Jareb.

"Troll-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol!" sounded a

voice from the inner door.

Jareb looked up and saw his wife.

Just a clean, good-natured and happy as he

Short, fat, clean, good-natured and happy as he

The shoe was dressed neatly for all her poverty,

and the flush of gladness upon her plump

cheeks.

"Duck," said Jareb, "the likes of this never

happened afore."

"What is it, my own sugar plum?" asked

Hepebath.

Hepebath was her name, though she hadn't

heard it pronounced in full for years.

"D'ye see this shoe, delight?"

"Yes, my love."

"Tis the last work in the castle. Not another

place to put a peg have I got by me. We'll start

the gates, lower the drawbridge, put the warder

on guard, and call out our coach, eh?"

"Ye mean, we'll go and walk, peppermint?"

"I do, my treasure."

"Shall I put on my silk, or satin? or my new

velvet?"

"Put on all of them, my dear. We'll make

an appearance. Hif-fool-de-rol-de-rol! There

(tap) that's the last peg, and old Smith's shoes

are done. Smith—Smith—didn't you ever feel

THE MAINE FARMER: AN

"Hi dum de-fo-fo-fo! Well, I s'pose I must

stick to my business!"

Thus speaking, Jareb left the shop, and when

he returned he put on his apron again and settled

into his low seat. The old man took off his cloak

and sat down, and the cobbler pulled off the

while, and when 'twas ready he took up the boot.

"You seem to be a happy fellow," remarked

the visitor, after he had watched Jareb's good

natured face awhile.

"Why shouldn't I be? I owe no man any

thing—have my health—and I love to do my work.

Troll-de-rol-de-rol!"

"You're laid by something, I suppose, for a

rainy day?" pursued the stranger.

"Ay, thousands upon thousands of dollars, sir!"

cried Jareb, giving his awl a furious punch.

"What? So much as that?"

"Ha! I'd like to show 'em to ye, sir, only

they might have dirty faces. Seven of 'em, sir!

Seven of the best natured children ye ever saw, sir,

and stout and rugged too."

"Ah! I meant to ask you if you had not

managed to lay by a little money, my good man.

You seem steady and industrious."

"Money?" repeated Jareb, with a comical leer.

"Does a man lay by money when he's building

himself houses and gardens? No, sir. Nor does

a man lay by money when he makes half a crown

a day, and rears seven children. Them little

uns will take care of me when I am old, never

fear. No, no—

Money or gold, in hoarded store,

I have none of it—have none—

I live and breathe—I do no more—

Fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol!

And I'm the happiest man alive—

Fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol!"

"Then you live contented on your scanty store?"

said the old man, regarding the cobbler rather

curiously.

"Just as contented as the day is long, sir.

And why shouldn't I? I want starve while

there's a crust of bread in the house, or a ripped

shell in the village. I should like money if I

could have it; but I wouldn't pass one day or

night of discontent for all the money in the

world."

"And if you had money what would you do

with it?"

For the first time Jareb looked sober. His awl

was stopped in the puncture it had made, and

his eye rested vacantly upon the floor. When

he spoke, all his lightness of manner was gone,

and his voice tremulous.

"Well, I'll tell ye," he said, while a twitching

of the nether lip told that he felt deeply. "I

can't help thinkin' that my little ones aren't a

coming up as some folks' little ones. They are

good, and honest, and happy; but if they could

have a chance to get a little more learnin' than

their poor old father's got, I should'n't mind. I

can't help thinkin' as how't there might be a

bright mind or two amongst them, that might

make a doctor, or a lawyer, or may be a minister.

But never mind—they're in God's hands. I don't

complain. Complain!" repeated Jareb thrusting

his awl through, and then pulling it out—

"why should I? How many a rich father would

give all he's worth if his children could be differ-

ent from what they are? Sickly and weakly,

may be, or perhaps bad and wicked. Hi!

There's no such word as complain,

for by it we're getting no gain

Save trouble and mental pain.

With a fol-de-rol-de-rol!"

"No, sir. I've got more than that's more'n

everybody's got."

The boot was finished, and the old man took

out a golden guinea.

"I've no change for such a piece, sir," said

Jareb.

"I don't want any change. Take it all. A

shilling is to pay you for mending my boots, and

the rest is for your wife and children to pay them

for the loss of their walk. Come, don't disap-

point me."

Jareb took the coin, and though his thankful-

ness was deep, its expression was simple and po-

lito.

The old man put on his boot and went away.

The wife came in and Jareb showed his treasure.

They were as rich as monarchs now. They danced

THE MAINE FARMER: AN

"Some, some, sir. But that isn't the thing now.

Didn't you lose something the day you came to my

shop?"

"Lose?" repeated the old man, starting—

Did you find anything?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was it a purse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Of green silk?"

"Yes, sir."

"With fifty gold guineas in it?"

"I don't know what was in it. I found it, and

if you will go down with me, you shall have it."

The stranger regarded the cobbler for some mo-

ments in silence, and finally said he would go.

So Jareb led the way to his little cot.

"Here, my love," said the cobbler, addressing

his wife, "let us have a candle, the gentleman

has come for his purse."

"We haven't got a candle, Jareb, but I have

something that will answer."

And thus speaking, Heppy went out, and when

he returned she brought a pine knot, which she

lighted by the fire. Jareb took this, and turned

towards the cellar, and the stranger followed him.

"I can get it, sir."

"Go on—I'll follow you."

The cobbler said no more, but hobbled down

the narrow steps, and when he came to that part

of the wall where the purse had been concealed

he asked his companion to hold the torch. The

latter did so, and then Jareb removed the stone

and drew forth a paper parcel, all damp and

mildewed. They returned to the upper room,

where Jareb unfolded the stout paper and pro-

duced the purse untipped.

"Here, sir; here is your purse, just as I found

it."

The old man emptied out the broad gold pieces,

and counted them—just fifty of them. He return-

ed them to his purse, and then looked into Jareb's

face.

"Have you suffered for want of money during

your sickness?" he asked.

"Much, much," was the answer.

"And you had this gold by you all the while?"

"It wasn't ours, sir. Oh, I may have suffered,

but not as I would have suffered had I taken that

mine's mine, it was yours. Take it, sir; and

when you remember poor old Jareb Gropp and

his seven children, and his own wife, you will

say they weren't very larned, but you'll say they

were honest."

"Gropp?—Gropp?—Gropp?" repeated the

old man, fixing his gaze not upon Jareb, but up-

on his wife. "You are not from England, are

you?" turning to Jareb.

"Yes, sir," answered the cobbler.

"From what part?"

"From Davenport, among the hills of North-

ampton."

"And what was your name before you were

married?" the old man asked of the good wife.

"My maiden name was Hepebath Munson,

sir."

"Were you from Davenport?"

"No, sir. I was from Kibworth, in Leicester."

I went to Davenport to live when I was sixteen."

"You never had a brother?"

"Yes, sir. I had one—George—he went off to

India, and there he died! Poor George! He

was a good boy—he was very good to me. He

was a smart young man when he went away."

"How do you know he is dead?"

"Because we never heard from him, sir."

"Hepebath!" cried the old man, starting to

his feet. "Look at me! Look at me, I say! See

if you can tell me who I am! I remember now

of hearing that you had married a man named

Gropp, but I could not find where you had moved."

I was negligent—very. But say, do you know

me?"

"It ain't George Munson!" gasped Heppy,

starting from his chair, and trembling like an

aspen.

"Look at that purse! Didn't you see that

name? And as the old man spoke he showed her

a name worked in golden thread, but which she

had not detected. But she read it now—George

Munson.

Then she looked into the time worn face, and

gradually the features of one she loved in years

long gone were revealed to her. It was her brother

PHILIP THE SECOND.

We extract the following sketch from the third

volume of Prescott's Philip the Second. It gives

a graphic and vivid sketch of the almost insur-

mountable Philip—

"Philip, unlike most of his predecessors, rarely

took his seat in the council of state. It was his

maxim that his ministers would more freely dis-

cuss measures in the absence of their master than